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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 11 March 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I must draw your urgent attention to the escalation of deadly violence and terror being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip in recent days. In grave violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the occupying Power has been carrying out a series of military strikes, including extrajudicial killings and military assaults, against civilians and civilian areas that have led in the past few days to the killing of at least 18 Palestinians, among them a 12-year-old boy, and the wounding of dozens of other civilians, including women and children, many of whom remain in serious condition.

The extremely fragile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, is worsening and risks further destabilization as a result of this Israeli aggression and its incessant illegal actions against the Palestinian civilian population. We call on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its obligations under the Charter and under international law, including international humanitarian law, as it pertains to the rights and protection of civilians in armed conflict, including foreign occupation. The Palestinian people cannot remain the exception to this responsibility to protect civilians from such war crimes and atrocities.

The most recent Israeli attacks against the Gaza Strip involve Israel's extrajudicial killing, i.e., targeted assassination, of two Palestinian men, Zuhair Al-Qaisy and Mahmoud Hanani, on Friday, 9 March, in a military air strike on the vehicle in which the men were riding in Gaza City. The deliberate assassination of those men was followed by a series of air strikes by the Israeli occupying forces against other areas in the Gaza Strip throughout Saturday, 10 March, including missile strikes by warplanes on Beit Lahiya, Deir Al-Balah and the Shuja'iya neighbourhood

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of Gaza City. The attacks resulted in the killing of another 10 Palestinians, with reports indicating that their bodies were torn to pieces by the missiles that struck them. These barbaric attacks by the occupying Power also resulted in the injury of at least 21 other Palestinians, among them several children and women, and three victims remain in critical condition.

Today, 11 March, Israel has continued to launch more attacks against the Gaza Strip from the dark early morning hours and throughout the day, causing more death, destruction and fear and trauma among the Palestinian civilian population. Air strikes have been deliberately launched with the aim of committing the extrajudicial execution of yet more Palestinians. A strike targeting a motorcycle travelling near Rabia Al-Adawiya school in Rafa, in the south of Gaza, killed Mahdi Abu Shawish.

This same vicious practice was carried out by an Israeli drone, which fired upon a motorcycle near Khan Younis, killing two other Palestinians, Hussein Barham Al-Breim and Mansour Kamal Abu Nuseira. In yet another attack, the Israeli occupying forces struck at the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, killing a young boy, Ayoub Useila, age 12, and wounding his 7-year-old cousin. Israeli warplanes also fired at an area in the Zaytoun neighbourhood of Gaza City, killing Ahmad Dieb Salim, age 24, in what clearly appears to be another extrajudicial killing. Also, a farmer in Gaza City, Adel Al-Issi, age 52, was killed by an Israeli missile fired from a warplane as he was tending to his field.

Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable for these crimes of aggression against the Palestinian people. The international community, including the Security Council, must act forthwith to bring an immediate halt to this escalation of violence and to demand that Israel abide by its legal obligations under the Charter and as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, cannot be selectively applied when it comes to the Palestinian people, who continue to unjustly suffer under Israel's now nearly 45-year military occupation. The Palestinian people must be accorded the same rights and protections guaranteed by international law as all other peoples, and the international community, including the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, has the duty to ensure respect for those provisions of international humanitarian law that protect the rights, safety and well-being of a people living under foreign occupation. If Israel is allowed to continue to flagrantly and deliberately breach the law without accountability, this will only ensure the bolstering of its impunity and the further escalation of its crimes against the Palestinian people, with far-reaching consequences for the future of our people and the prospects for peace and stability to ever be realized. We thus call on the international community to act with urgency to address this crisis.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 419 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 24 February 2012 (A/ES-10/547-S/2012/116), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations